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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/815,640	04/02/2004	Paul Lapstun	HYC006US	9567

24011 7590 08/30/2006

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EXAMINER

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ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2625	

DATE MAILED: 08/30/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.



## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114***

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on June 22, 2006 has been entered.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1, 9-18, 20, 28-30, 31-37 and 39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Earl et al (US Patent No. 5,231,663) in view of Nalder (US Patent No. 6,614,931).

Concerning claims 1, 7, 20 and 26, Earl et al discloses a system (Fig.1) for enabling a user to enter a competition and limiting subsequent communication between an application and the user via a sensing device (14) interacting with a machine-readable coded data printed on a surface (22), the system and method comprising a computer system (10) configured and programmed the steps of receiving interaction data (vector representation) representing the

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interaction of the sensing device with the coded data (36-40, Fig.3), the interaction data enabling identification of the application (40-42, Fig.3); transmitting information based on at least some of the interaction data to the application and enabling transmission of a number of electronic messages from the application to the user (44, Fig.3), Abstract; col. 2, line 46 – col. 4, line 16; col. 4, line 51 – col. 5, line 24; col. 6, line 17 – col. 7, line 18; col. 8, lines 20-28).

Earl et al does not directly teach the enabling transmission of up to a predetermined number of electronic messages from the application to the user. However, Earl et al teaches a Build and Transmit Score Report subsystem 84, whose activities are placed in activity database 62, takes the score information from scores database 82 and builds score reports which are provided to facsimile 14 through interface 50 (col. 5, lines 3-9). Earl further teaches that the Build and Transmit Score Report subsystem 84 is depend on the parameters set forth during header processing in order to create responses and then transmits them. This transmission is either a return facsimile containing results, or is a data transmission occurring over a network or conventional data transmission medium as would potentially be the case with order entry, inventory, routing, command, or even certain permutations of scoring processes (col. 6, lines 60-68). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to consider the number of transmitted electronic messages in Earl et al is predetermined since the Build and Transmit Score Report subsystem 84 takes score information from scores database 82 to builds score reports which is a predetermined number of messages.

In addition, Earl fails to teach the step of allocating and recording a unique reply code for the transmitted information wherein the reply code having a predetermined maximum number of reply transmission associated therewith and the maximum value is determined by the user

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checking a box on the surface. Nalder discloses a messaging device having a message reception component configured to receive a printable message from a message originator, and a printer that prints the received message wherein a user marks it up for reply to the message originator. The messaging device has an optical scanner and optical recognition logic that detects the origin identifier and that instructs the messaging device to send the annotated message back to the message originator (Fig.1; Abstract). Nalder further teaches that the reply input field is defined by a pair of brackets surrounding a blank space as one maximum number of reply transmission (Fig.5). In Fig.6, Nalder teaches a reply input field 114 where the user can mark to indicate that the message is to be returned to its originator after annotation. Step 48 comprises scanning the annotated message to capture a digital image of the annotated message, step 50 performed by optical recognition component 20 comprises detecting and interpreting the origin identifier from the captured image of the annotated message, step 52 comprises detecting whether the reply input field 114 has been marked and if it has, a step 54 is performed of transmitting the annotated image to the message originator identified by the origin identifier (col. 4, lines 34-61). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the above teaching of Nalder to a return facsimile containing results or certain permutations of scoring processes in Earl since both of them teach an image processing system used for mark sense recognition in which mark information is decoded from an optical scanner or a sensing device.

Concerning claims 9-11, 14, Earl et al further teaches that a message is sent by the application to the user in response to an electronic status request or the message is indicative of a status of the competition, (col. 5, lines 4-9; col. 6, lines 60-68), (claims 9-10); assigning an alias

ID to the user; and transmitting the alias ID to the application with the information based on the interaction data (col. 5, lines 53-68), (claim 11); the electronic message is indicative of any one or more of a confirmation of receipt of the interaction data and a response based on the interaction data received in the computer system (Fig.3; col. 3, line 47 – col. 4, line 7; col. 5, lines 4-9), (claim 14);

Concerning claims 12-13, 15-18, 31-35, Earl et al does not specifically teach that the printed surface is a product label and the application is under the control of a manufacturer producer or other commercial entity associated with the product label (claim 12-13) and further information regarding of the label (claims 15-18). However, Earl et al teaches, “This present invention is capable of extracting image objects from an incoming image. These objects are in two forms: (1) pixel-mapped images in mono or poly-planar format(s), e.g., graphics, or (2) textual image comprised of symbols of alphabets.” (col. 8, lines 20-27). That can include a product of label since it can be in pixel-mapped images, graphics, characters, or symbols. It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to consider that the printed surface taught in Earl can be a product label as a matter of well known in the art (col. 1, lines 30-39), and since Earl further teaches that “The purpose of this process is to isolate image components and then compare them with known elements for identification and/or classification.” (col. 8, lines 25-28) and “potential applications are industrial process, home computer process direction, batch request, etc.” (col. 6, lines 6-7). That can be interpreted that the label can be associated with a manufacturer, producer or other commercial entity, and the label includes human-readable information, and the label is an identifier or a product code.

Concerning claims 28-30, 36-37, Earl further teaches the surface includes human readable information which is sensed during the interaction, the coded data relates to an identity of the surface, and the interaction data is indicative of the identity, (col. 2, line 46 – col. 3, line 51; col. 4, lines 43-50), (claims 28-29), the form includes one or more of: information fields that show information about the surface, button fields that generate one or more actions in the computer system when interacted with by the sensing device; and entry fields for receiving user input through interaction of the sensing device (claim 30); a page server to convert the interaction data to form data and to transmit the form data to the application; a net page registration server to identify the user and to allocate an alias ID, (col. 4, line 17 – col. 5, line 68), (claims 36-37).

Concerning claim 39, Earl et al discloses a surface including coded data and human-readable information (22, Fig.1) configured for use in the method of claim 1 or the system of claim 20 above.

3. Claims 2-6, 8, 21-25, 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Earl et al in view of Nalder as applied to claims 1, 20 above, and further in view of Ernst (US Patent No. 5,572,674).

Concerning claims 2-8, 21-25, 27, Earl further teaches that the predetermined number of electronic message is set by the user through interaction of the sensing device with the printed competition entry form (when the sensing device reads the header in the form).

Earl et al fails to teach a predetermined maximum value of electronic messages read from the sensing device and a contact counter for incrementing a contact count for each electronic

message sent from the application to the user, and preventing transmission of further electronic messages once the contact count reaches a predetermined maximum value. Ernst discloses a method, which is implemented via a set of network control programs for controlling the communications in a communication controller wherein a number of network control program (NCP) parameters are tuned to optimize network performance. For example, the MAXOUT parameters relates to the fact that a message counter is assigned to every message that goes out. The MAXOUT parameter, set at system generation time for the controller's NCP load module, establishes a maximum count of messages allowed to go out to a terminal attached to the controller before an acknowledgement comes back. Referring to Fig.1, assume for example that ten messages are queued up to be sent by a controller P2 and the MAXOUT parameter for the controller is seven. After seven messages are sent out, any message sent out after that is assumed to have been lost. This gives the NCP positive confirmation of receipt, explicitly or implicitly (col. 39-67). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the MAXOUT parameter set in the network control program in Ernst to the control program in Earl since Earl also teaches different programs in the computer system 12 for controlling the accurate positive confirmation receipt for accounting purpose and also for billing purpose.

4. Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Earl in view of Nalder as applied to claim 18 above, and further in view of Berson (US Patent No. 5,514,860).

Concerning claim 19, Earl et al fails to teach that the label, which includes machine-readable coded data, is substantially invisible to human. However, it was commonly known in



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the art that a label can have machine-readable coded data, which is invisible to a human. Berson support that well known in the prior art by teaching a document authentication system (Figs.3-4) utilizing a transparent label for encoding data derived from scanning the document and printing encoded data on the transparent label with invisible ink (Figs.1-2; col. 4, lines 17-50). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the above teaching of Berson for the scanner in 14 in Earl et al to scan to a label including invisible human coded data since the scanner 14 is also a machine-readable coded data while Earl does not limit that the scanner 14 cannot read invisible to human coded data.

5. Claim 38 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Earl et al in view of Nalder as applied to claim 20 above, and further in view of Dougherty et al (US Patent No. 6,076,734).

Concerning claim 38, Earl fails to teach that the system comprises an internet-accessible location for posting the electronic messages wherein the electronic messages are accessible to the user via the location. Dougherty et al discloses method and system for providing human/computer interfaces with a computer system by engaging a sensor with desired regions of an encoded physical medium (Fig.1) wherein when the user engages the sensor with a region having certain encoded information, the certain encoded information is interpreted and an appropriated action taken (Abstract). Dougherty further teaches a data linked book (350) for linking a physical book with data available via an information network such as the Internet. The linked data is then presented on an Internet device such as a personal computer (col. 11, lines 18-25) and that the computer system uses other received information to download the desired data

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from the Internet, presenting such data to the user in the proper form (col. 11, lines 48-65). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the above teaching of Dougherty et al to the system in Earl for posting electronic messages to the user via an internet-accessible location since Earl also teaches that the computer system 12 can be connected to a network which can be the Internet (Fig.1).

### ***Conclusion***

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

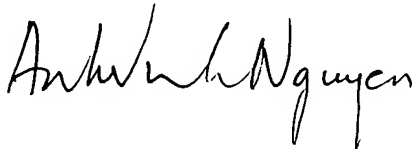
- a. Voticky et al (US Patent No. 6,351,764) discloses a method of sorting a received information message including the steps of receiving the message, looking up the identifier in a database, assigning a code for the message per the result of the step of looking-up.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Madeleine AV Nguyen whose telephone number is 571 272-7466. The examiner can normally be reached on Tuesday-Thursday 12:30-6:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Edward L. Coles can be reached on 571 272-7402. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



Madeleine AV Nguyen  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 2625

August 28, 2006